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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [GJ](#)
SUBJECT: CODEL ENGEL'S VISIT TO GRENADA

Classified By: CDA Mary Ellen T. Gilroy for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The April 13-15, 2007, visit of CODEL Engel to Grenada was a great success. Grenadians, including government and opposition leaders, and resident American and local business people, were pleased with the opportunity to exchange views with the delegation and hopeful that the visit will result in tangible benefits for the country and the region. Representative Eliot assured local officials, and via a press conference, the people of Grenada, of continued U.S. interest in, and engagement with, the region. Prime Minister Keith Mitchell thanked the United States for its assistance following Hurricanes Ivan (2004) and Emily (2005). He also raised with the delegation GOG concern about criminal deportees and a lack of USG college scholarships for Caribbean students. Deputy Prime Minister Gregory Bowen hosted a dinner for the delegation, which was attended by a number of Cabinet members and government officials.

¶2. (C) The CODEL was able to view the results of the USG's USD 46 million assistance program for Hurricane Ivan reconstruction at two locations. In addition, the Chancellor of St. George's University (SGU), Dr. Charles R. Modica, agreed to delegation members' request to look into additional scholarships for minority and women students from their congressional districts; the members toured the SGU campus. On April 14 the CODEL hosted a lunch for local business leaders followed by a press conference. Because changes in the CODEL's schedule did not allow for a separate meeting with Grenada's opposition leaders, post invited opposition head Tillman Thomas and the opposition Member of Parliament from South St. George's, Glynis Roberts, to the lunch. Immediately following the lunch, CODEL members held a press conference for local media. END SUMMARY.

¶3. (C) Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, Representative Eliot Engel (D-NY), led the congressional delegation to Grenada and Trinidad & Tobago April 13-16, ¶2007. Members of CODEL Engel included: Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY) and Mrs. Engel, Rep. Barbara Lee (D-NY), Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA) and Ambassador Sidney Williams, Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), and Rep. Yvette Clarke (D-NY); staff assistants Jason Steinbaum, Eric Jacobstein, and Mark Walker; Bethesda Naval Hospital staff physician Dr. Paul Florentino; and other military support staff.

USG Post-Hurricane Ivan Reconstruction and Assistance

¶4. (C) The delegation's program started April 14 with a visit

to the National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA), which USAID/OFDA helped to bolster following Hurricane Ivan in 2004. NADMA continues to receive USG support for both equipment and training, especially through foreign military financing (FMF) funds now scheduled to be eliminated for the Eastern Caribbean. NADMA Director Sylvan McIntyre described the operation for the delegation and explained that the USG is the only major donor to his organization. McIntyre gave a tour of the facility.

15. (C) Following NADMA, the delegation toured the Richmond Hill Home for the Elderly, one of only two such facilities in Grenada. The Home cares not only for senior citizens, but also for the severely physically and mentally handicapped. USG funds, in conjunction with the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and Canada's development agency (CIDA), helped replace the roof on the patients' side of the building. The tour highlighted for the delegation the continuing need for supplies such as adult diapers and wheelchairs as well as additional construction.

St. George's University

16. (C) Dr. Charles R. Modica, the Chancellor of St. George's University (SGU)--a medical school founded by Modica and others for students who do not get into U.S. medical schools--met with delegation members and conducted a tour of the university's Grand Anse campus. SGU provides USD 17 million in scholarships to Grenadian students to attend college and has created an undergraduate program specifically for them. According to Modica, students from around the world are also taking advantage of the educational opportunities at SGU. He has reached out to African countries as well and at the moment 40 students from Botswana are enrolled in the medical school.

17. (C) Rep. Barbara Lee asked about the numbers of African-American students at SGU this year, since the numbers were low last year. Rep. Jackson Lee asked if the university was reaching out to African-American and Latino inner city students to bring to medical school. SGU's Dean of Students, Dr. Ted Hollis, explained that SGU set up a pre-med program that helps to bring students up to the level at which they can handle the medical school program. This three-year (one in the educational services program and then two at the medical school) program was designed for Grenadian students who come into SGU with weaker schooling from the local educational system, to ensure they get the help they need to complete the medical school program. He suggested that students from other countries could use this program as well.

Modica offered to set up pre-med and medical scholarships for students in the members' congressional districts and have the university's recruiters target those areas. He said that he wants the students who receive scholarships to promise to return to the areas they are from to work for an as-yet-undetermined period of time. Modica promised to follow up as soon as possible to sort out the details. Another concern raised by several members of the delegation was the lack of good nurse training in the U.S. Nurses can earn more working for hospitals than by teaching. Hollis briefly described SGU's efforts to develop a nursing school which they hope to have fully functioning soon, with instructors from around the world. Following the discussion, Modica gave the group a tour of university facilities, visiting lecture halls, the library, and labs. The tour ended at SGU's moving memorial to the 23 American service members who lost their lives during the 1983 U.S.-Caribbean intervention since, about which Modica observed, "They did it, at least in part, for us."

Government of Grenada

18. (C) Prime Minister Keith Mitchell met with the delegation at the Grenada National Cricket Stadium, where he was watching one of the Super Eight games. He joined them in the President's box, an air-conditioned room behind the stands,

with a flat screen TV showing the game. The PM welcomed the group, saying he was very pleased that they had chosen to visit Grenada. Mitchell made a pitch for Caribbean scholarships; repeating as he does for every official U.S. visitor his fond memories of Reagan-era scholarships, observing, "When the Wall fell, the scholarships left too." The other main issue Mitchell raised was criminal deportees. He acknowledged that the United States has the right to determine who can remain in the country, but complained that "they come to Grenada without notice and cause trouble." Mitchell provided the example of two villages at each other's throats where he negotiated a truce and then discovered that a youth, deported from the U.S., had started the dispute. Mitchell also asked for help developing programs to deal with them, e.g., training, rehabilitation, as well as counseling for family. (COMMENT: This is the only concrete example of a deportee engaging in criminal behavior upon his return to Grenada that Mitchell has ever provided us. Grenada receives about 50 deportees from the U.S. per year, both criminal and non-criminal. The GOG is notified at least twice during the process, once in Washington when the Grenadian embassy is asked to provide travel documents and again 10 days prior to the deportation via dipnote from post to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Trade, and by fax to the Commissioner of Police. There appears to be a breakdown in communication among the GOG entities. END COMMENT.)

19. (C) Chairman Engel told the Prime Minister that this trip was his first abroad after becoming chairman of the House International Relations Committee (HIRC) and his first to Grenada. He expressed his desire to strengthen the ties between the two countries, noting the long history of friendship and cooperation. The other members of Congress raised the following issues:

- Rep. Waters noted the importance of cooperation on drug interdiction, adding that other Eastern Caribbean and CARICOM nations had expressed concern about possible impingement on their sovereignty. She said the Congressional Black Caucus understands these concerns but also wants to work with the countries to ensure effective drug interdiction.

- Rep. Lee told Mitchell her primary concern is to increase trade between Grenada and the U.S. west coast. She encouraged the Prime Minister to focus more on California as a destination for people and goods.

- Rep. Jackson Lee said she is embarrassed by U.S. inattentiveness to the Caribbean. She suggested Grenada reach out to Continental Airlines to consider Grenada as a destination to increase direct flights from various parts of the United States to Grenada, including from the Southwest. Lee asked that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Trade draft five points on issues of concern to Grenada, e.g., human resources, cultural exchange, homeland security, and send the list to Congress to improve the dialogue. Rep. Lee also told the PM that they (Congress) are aware of the deportee issue.

- Rep. Clarke mentioned that she was not on the HIRC, but appreciated Engel reaching out and including her on the trip. She added that her congressional district in New York has the highest number of Grenadians resident anywhere in the United States.

Chairman Engel summed up by acknowledging that the issue of criminal deportees is one they have heard from a number of different Caribbean countries. He will be happy to look into it. Engel also mentioned that assistance is important for the region and that his committee will be looking into a number of different options.

110. (C) Deputy Prime Minister Gregory Bowen hosted a dinner for the delegation at True Blue Bay Resort and Villas April 14. Also attending were Minister for Education and Labour and member of parliament for St. John's Parish, Claris Charles; Minister for Health, Social Security, the Environment, and Ecclesiastic Relations, Senator Ann

David-Antoine; Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Culture and Performing Arts, Brenda Hood. Minister of Finance and Planning Anthony Boatswain and the Junior Minister of National Security, Einstein Louison, though invited, did not attend. Chairman Engel and Deputy Prime Minister Bowen exchanged toasts to mutual friendship and continued cooperation.

Other Activities

11. (C) CODEL Engel hosted a lunch for local business people at their hotel, including a number of American business people resident in Grenada. About 20 were invited, including members of the local branch of the Chamber of Commerce, University administration, energy-related companies, Grenada's Tourism Board, several artists and hoteliers. Because of changes to the CODEL's schedule, which made a separate meeting with leaders of the main opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) impossible, Embassy Grenada invited two NDC members to attend the lunch. (NOTE: The opposition took advantage of their invitation to bash the government on an April 15 local radio program. An opposition leader--not one invited to the lunch--told the program's host that the GOG had stood the Embassy up. Charge later told the two who had attended the lunch (Tillman Thomas and Glynis Roberts) that she was surprised to hear this on the program and hoped to clear up any misunderstandings by letting them know that the government was not invited to the lunch. In fact, the opposition representatives had only been invited because we could not find any time on April 14 to fit a separate meeting with the opposition into the CODEL's schedule and we thought it important to give them the opportunity. END NOTE.)

12. (U) CODEL Engel held a news conference immediately after the lunch. Reports were carried the next day on radio and television and in the following editions of the three major newspapers (all weeklies).
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